

# STEAL THIS NEWSLETTER

The Word on the Street from the Office of Learning Advancement

## Distinguished Faculty Lecturers



On April 6 Dr. Anne Canavan, Associate Professor and Department Coordinator in English, Linguistics, and Writing Studies at SLCC, gave the 2023 Distinguished Faculty Lecture. Her presentation was titled “Isn’t It Supposed to Be This Hard?: Mental Health, Academia, and Balance.” It proved to be a great balance of academic insight, practical advice, and humor.

Anne reviewed the literature on best practices at colleges and universities that support faculty with mental health challenges. She shared her own blue sky proposals for making SLCC a more welcoming and supportive place.

Following her lecture she engaged the audience in an open

dialogue about mental health, encouraging them to voice their own practices and protocols that would help support faculty with mental illness.



Dr. Kristi Green, Associate Professor and Management Department Coordinator, Gail Miller School of Business at SLCC has been chosen as the 2024 Distinguished Faculty Lecturer.

Kristi’s lecture will focus on the experiences and stories of Latinas working in higher education and how colleges can foster more inclusive environments. “These narratives are considered ‘Counterstories.’ Counterstorytelling is a method of recounting the experiences of the racially and socially marginalized,” Kristi says. She notes there are still few Latinas in higher education leadership positions. This brought her to wonder how community colleges are supporting Latinas and to conduct her own research on the issue.

Her lecture will also highlight the progress SLCC has made toward equity, as well as opportunities for improvement. “We will workshop and discuss our own origin stories, what constitutes our identities, what supports we need to

advance our own careers, identify where we will no longer compromise, and what practices we might adopt to better support inclusivity.”

## Staff Profile: Amanda Meidell



Amanda Meidell is the new Administrative Assistant for the Office of Learning Advancement (OLA). She is originally from Oregon but “moved to Utah for a boy.” She has two amazing children, a 16-year-old son that towers over her and a 10-year-old daughter who is the cutest version of herself. Amanda loves coffee and art, which is why she graduated from Weber State University with a bachelor's in art and a minor in art history.

It's been two months since Amanda started working with OLA and she loves it. When she was offered the position, she visited Redwood to meet the team. “The minute I walked on campus, it just felt different. I met the team, and it was so exciting and everything felt energized. After the tour I felt like I was chomping at the bit to start working here. I had some other interviews that I went to and even got another job offer, but I just could not accept any of them. I was so excited about SLCC.”

Amanda's past year has been quite adventurous as she has undertaken a journey of self-care. She worked remotely in her previous work, and it isolated her so much that she had to seek therapy to realign herself with the things that gave her inner peace. She spent so much time alone that it was killing her soul. There was no break from work, since work was only 10 feet from her bed. She felt trapped. In her words, “I needed to take care of myself and to protect my mental health.” Despite the toll the job was taking on her, she was heartbroken when she resigned, but it was for the best. There were too many unrealistic expectations. Mental health is extremely important to Amanda.

Covid propelled many of us to take a closer look at self-love and setting healthy boundaries. Amanda used the time to examine the importance of community and not cutting herself off from people. Face-to-face time is essential for Amanda. Communication is necessary, and if she can't be face to face, she checks in by sending silly memes. For her, “the biggest thing is just don't forget that you have people in your life and sometimes you must put effort into keeping them in your life. You can't just wait for them to check on you, you should check up on them. People appreciate that.” Amanda's story is an example of what is possible when we truly commit to the self-care we need. We are delighted that Amanda felt safe to share her self-care journey with us. Thank you, Amanda!

In addition to self-care and prioritizing relationship, Amanda is writing a book based on a game she plays with her fiancé called “Guess What!?” The game consists of her or her partner asking the other “guess what?” Then, the other person comes up with a ridiculous story on the spot. Not to divulge too much, but she is putting all the stories they come up with together as a gift for her fiancé.

Amanda finds joy in the simple things and is delighted by simple things like having a job where she can get up, get dressed, drive to work, speak in-person with other individuals, and not play musical chairs by herself at home. “Now that I've been here about two months, I still love it. Every day I think about what this last year has put me through, and it kind of feels like it was leading me here. I'm so grateful for this job. I'm so grateful for the experience, the opportunity, and for the people that are here. And now you're stuck with me forever.”

We are grateful to be stuck with you, Amanda. Welcome to SLCC.

—Kemone Carby Feleti

# Community Engagement Faculty Award

Daysi Hernandez is an Associate Professor in the School of Business. Of her K-12 experience, Daysi says: “I was an ESL student until 6th Grade and labeled ‘high-risk’ of dropping out of school until I graduated high school”. She was raised ten minutes away from Downtown Los Angeles. Daysi was a first-generation college student who, immediately after high school, attended Cal State University, Northridge. She beat her labels and graduated with a bachelor’s degree. Her first professional job



was elementary teaching for Los Angeles Unified School District. After teaching for five years, she moved to Utah. She worked in the corporate world for a while and started an MBA program. After completing her MBA, she found her way to Salt Lake Community College. She began in staff positions, first as the University Partnerships Coordinator in the Curriculum and Articulation Office, then as a Grant Manager in the Office of Sponsored Projects. After a few years, she was invited back to the classroom as a Faculty Fellow in the Gail Miller School of Business. She loves teaching! Daysi has stated that her background helps her stir passion in students to complete their courses successfully and attend other classes.

The Thyne Center for Student Life, Leadership & Community Engagement coordinates the SLCC

Presidential Community Engagement awards annually. Daysi is the 2023 Presidential Community Engagement Award winner for Faculty. Her nomination states the following:

*Daysi has gone above and beyond to serve Latinx and Hispanic students at SLCC. Daysi works with the Dream Center and has done several multicultural events to work with the Hispanic and Latinx communities. Last summer, Daysi used her free time to drive DACA students that could not fly to national competitions. Driving students who could not fly helped make the competition equitable and provided an opportunity for DACA students, they normally would not have. Daysi has spearheaded multiple fundraising events to raise money for students and serve the college. Daysi continues to go above and beyond and should be recognized for her efforts.*

Daysi is happy to receive an award for her community engagement efforts. She will continue to serve in the classroom and her community because this is deeply embedded in her value system. Join us in congratulating Daysi!

—Lucy Smith

## Staff Profile: Maria Fernanda Zapiain Navarro

Maria Fernanda Zapiain Navarro recently joined the Office of Learning Advancement team as the Coordinator for the Office of Learning Assessment. She is originally from northeast Mexico and moved to the United States to work at SLCC. Fernanda has been with the college for four months and is excited to be here and get more involved with the SLCC community.

Teaching has always been Fernanda's passion, from teaching her dolls as a child to her dream of teaching ballet and English as an adult. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees in teaching, with an emphasis on the arts. Two degrees in teaching led to her specializing in tutoring. She was content with a master's but her time at SLCC has shifted her perspective. She expressed, "I was not really interested in a PhD to be honest. But coming here and seeing that it is very well valued. It is like, wow, you need to have a PhD. So, I kind of am considering it and maybe not now, but in the long run."

Fernanda started her teaching career as a kindergarten teacher. Like kindergarten teachers in the United States, she taught English, social studies, and everything in between. She later switched it up and taught math in junior and high school. As the years went by, she wondered "Where do I want to be in like, 5 to 10 years from now?" She did not want to be the same person, teaching the same subject, in the same place. So, she took a leap, applied to be the Learning Outcomes Assessment Coordinator, and came to SLCC. Since moving to Salt Lake, she has enjoyed learning new things every day. She has grown not just professionally but personally as well. She enjoys hearing about new experiences and sharing her experiences with people. This is her first job on the staff side of education, and she likes having both teaching experience and an opportunity to support faculty and students outside of the classroom. She can now offer best practice guidance to faculty to help them with their curriculum.



Fernanda wants to give a shout out to Kino Hurtado, our awesome HSI Director. She is extremely interested in the HSI initiative and would love to be part of the HSI committee. One thing Fernanda would like to say to students who feel they do not belong is, "Just know that you do belong, and one thing to remember is that you're learning. You are going to do different things that you have done in your life. Other people will learn from you as well. Really at the end of the day, you can do it."

Fernanda is energetic and eager to learn all the new things that come with this journey in her life here at SLCC. So far, she has really enjoyed being in Salt Lake City and at SLCC. She enjoys learning about Utah culture, as it is different from where she is from in Mexico. Like many of us, she enjoys watching TV shows in her spare time.



## Honors Students in Montana

SLCC honors students presented the results of their dynamic inquiry-based and undergraduate research during the Western Regional Honors Conference (WRHC) at the University of Montana in Missoula on March 31, 2023. Their posters and presentations were anchored in the work completed for Honors course projects on the following topics and sociopolitical issues:

Maria Julia Ramos Ferreira—Voices of Resilience: Immigration System Through Immigrants' Voices

Asia Rondoni—Racial Coding: The Integration of Black Americans, Investigating War on Drugs to the Prison Industrial Complex and the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

Anita Riddle and Sierra Schmidt—Music and Engineering Students Create User-Friendly Music Theory Application for Education and Analysis.

Manette Perez—Degrading Plastic: Brewer's Yeast to The Rescue!

Jack Bohun—PARE Project - What Lies Outside Your Front Door.

Synne Grubbs—The Influence of Influencers: How Does Social Media Impact Our Mental Health?

Gabriel Holm and Ashton Shade—The Suicide Belt: The Effects of Altitude, Demographics, and Culture in The Rocky Mountains.

Marjorie Wilson—Philosophy and Funding Healthcare.

T Souza—Intersectional Case Study of 'Public Charge Rule' in the US Immigration System.

Yesenia Figueroa—Black Women who Shaped the Future.

Jevahjire France—Educational Equity for English Language Learners.

Austin Karn—Tune In, Freak Out: Hunter S. Thompson as the Archetype for American Existentialism.

Additionally, the Honors and IDS Coordinator, Kathy Tran-Peters, and I presented on "The History of Honors Education: Addressing the Past & Embracing the Future." As we experienced at last year's WHRC, there were many questions this year about how SLCC uses ePortfolio and how we developed the SLCC Honors Program. SLCC honors students who attended the presentation shared their insights and experiences with other attendees. Their voices reflected how meaningful it has been for them to be a part of the program and to participate in further developing the program alongside faculty and staff. Once again, the students showed up for each other and the communities they represented in powerful ways.

—Kati Lewis

